

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 241430Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3513

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T LISBON 4174

EXDIS

DEPT ALSO PASS INFO DIA WASHDC AND USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: PRO-COMMUNIST POWER PLAY

REF: (A) LISBON 4157, (B) LISBON 4149, (C) STATE 173076

(NOTAL), (D) LISBON 4129

1. PER REF (B), DATT MET AGAIN WITH PRESIDENT'S CHIEF MILITARY AIDE CALDAS. FOR FIRST TIME CALDAS INDICATED SOME NERVOUSNESS AT BEING SEEN TOO FREQUENTLY IN PRESENCE OF AMERICANS.

2. DATT ASKED CALDAS POINT BLANK IF COSTA GOMES INTENDED ALLOW VASCO GONCALVES TO STAY AND FORM A GOVERNMENT. CALDAS SAID THAT NOW SEEMED TO BE THE CASE, ALTHOUGH COSTA GOMES HAD SAID PRIVATELY THAT IT WAS TOO BAD VASCO DID NOT ASK TO BE RELIEVED. THAT WOULD BE MUCH SIMPLER FOR HIM (COSTA GOMES).

3. DATT ALSO ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE FORGED PLANS ON AN AMERICAN

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INVASION. CALDAS KNEW OF NONE, BUT DID REFER TO A WAR GAME

IN WHICH THE BLUES HAD TO DEAL WITH THE REDS, THE LATTER BEING A COUNTRY SUBVERTED BY COMMUNISM. ACCORDING TO CALDAS, COSTA GOMES WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT RUMORS OF U.S. INVASION. (FYI THIS MODIFIES INFORMATION GIVEN ME BY SOARES AND CONFIRMS WHAT VITOR ALVES TOLD ME YESTERDAY.)

4. DATT ASKED CALDAS WHY COSTA GOMES SEEMED TO BE ABANDONING MODERATES AND SUPPORTING VASCO GONCALVES. AFTER BRIDLING A BIT AT THE QUESTION, CALDAS SAID NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHAT IS IN COSTA GOMES'S MIND. BUT HE, CALDAS, THINKS THAT ALL THE PRESSURE ON COSTA GOMES IS LEADING HIM TO SUPPORT VASCO GONCALVES, BUT ONLY FOR THE SHORT TERM. IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS VASCO WILL AGAIN BE IN TROUBLE AND COSTA GOMES MIGHT TAKE DIFFERENT POSITION. (FYI THERE IS A THEORY AROUND TOWN THAT VASCO SHOULD BE GIVEN ANOTHER FEW MONTHS TO HANG HIMSELF BUT THIS THEORY IS NOT SHARED BY MELO ANTUNES, VITOR ALVES, ET AL.) THE MODERATES ARE TRYING TO TELL COSTA GOMES THAT EACH TIME HE LETS AN OPPORTUNITY SLIDE BY THE NEXT TIME IT WILL BE JUST THAT MUCH HARDER TO REMOVE VASCO GONCALVES.

5. CALDAS THEN ASKED WHAT THE U.S. INTENDED TO DO ABOUT AZORES. DATT ASKED WHY THE QUESTION. CALDAS SAID THERE IS A THEORY HELD BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND COSTA GOMES THAT PORTUGAL WITHOUT THE AZORES IF OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE TO US INTERESTS. THEY REASON THAT IF AZORES BECOME INDEPENDENT, PRINCIPAL U.S. INTEREST IN PORTUGAL WILL HAVE BEEN REMOVED AND USG WILL ALLOW PORTUGAL TO GO COMMUNIST AS A "VACCINE FOR EUROPE." DATT EXPLAINED THAT OUR POLICY WITH REGARD TO AZORES WAS ONE OF STRICT NEUTRALITY.

6. COMMENT: AS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED, A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE AZORES IN THE PAST FEW DAYS IN THE LISBON PRESS. THE PCP IS EXERTING PRESURE BY DEMANDING REPRESENTATION ON THE JUNTA. TODAY'S DIARIO DE NOTICIAS CLAIMS THAT REACTIONARIES HAVE THE RUN OF THE ISLANDS. COMING AS IT DOES AT A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRISIS, THIS SUGGESTS THAT USG POSITION ON AZORES IS NOW INVOLVED IN OVERALL POLITICAL DEBATE. WE HAVE STRESSED NEUTRALITY BUT PCP IS UNQUESTIONABLY DISSEMINATING PROPAGANDA TO THE CONTRARY.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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